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# THE INFINITY GAUNTLET™

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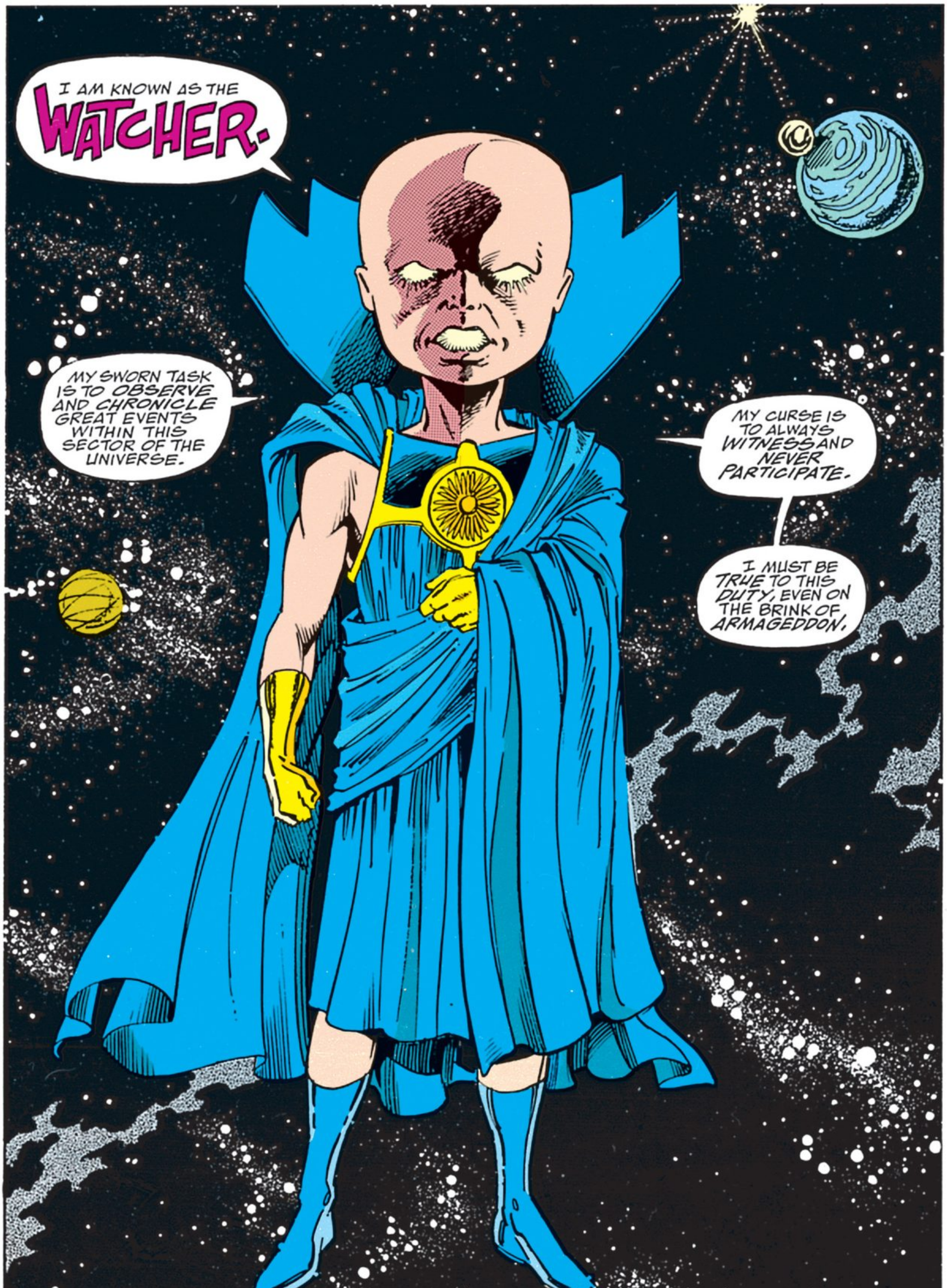


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A CONTINGENT OF COSMIC ENTITIES CHALLENGES THANOS'S MIGHT, SUCH A CONFLICT MAY WELL PROVE MORE THAN THIS FRAGILE REALITY CAN BEAR.

# ASTRAL CONFLAGRATION

THANOS OF TITAN...WE CALL UPON YOU TO SURRENDER THE INFINITY GEMS.

HONOR THIS REQUEST OR FACE POWER BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS.

I BELIEVE YOU WILL DISCOVER THE HORIZONS OF MY IMAGININGS FAR WIDER THAN YOU WOULD SUSPECT, LORD CHAOS.

YOU ADDRESS OMNIPOTENCE.

TREAD CAREFULLY.

JIM STARLIN WRITER | RON LIM PENCILS | JOSEF RUBINSTEIN INKS | LAUGHLIN & SCHEELE COLORS JACK MORELLI LETTERS | CRAIG ANDERSON EDITOR TOM DEFALCO CHIEF

THAT WHICH YOU CHALLENGE IS BEYOND EVEN YOUR MYSTIC UNDERSTANDING.

BEGONE, FOOLISH GODLINGS, OR SUFFER MY CELESTIAL WRATH.

I FANCY YOUR BROTHER IS ABOUT TO PUT ON QUITE A SHOW FOR US, YOUNG EROS!

WITH SUCH GRAND FORCES ALIGNED AGAINST HIM, THANOS WILL UNLEASH THE FULL FURY OF HIS POWER.

STILL, THE OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE YET REMAINS UNCERTAIN.

THERE'LL BE NO TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OR ENERGY TO BE WASTED ON NON-ESSENTIAL PRIORITIES.

SUCH AS THIS MONUMENT OR RELATIVES.

I DOUBT YOU'LL LAST MORE THAN A FEW MICRO-SECONDS INTO THE CONFLICT.

BUT IT SHOULD BE A QUICK DEATH.

OF COURSE, LORD THANOS HAS THE POWER TO REBUILD HIS LOVE MONUMENT AFTERWARDS.

HE'LL MAKE IT AS GOOD AS NEW.

PERHAPS HE'LL DO THE SAME FOR YOU.

JUST LOOK AT THE MARVELOUS JOB HE DID ON NEBULA.

WHILE HALF A GALAXY AWAY...

"...AND EARTH IS FALLING INTO ANOTHER ICE AGE.

WHAT TRANSPIRES ON YOUR FRONT, WARLOCK?

EARTH'S DEFENDERS HAVE FALLEN AND BEEN EXILED TO PARTS UNKNOWN.

PLEASE USE YOUR MYSTIC POWER, DR. STRANGE, TO LOCATE AS MANY AS YOU CAN, FOR LATER RETRIEVAL.

MEANWHILE, ETERNITY'S COSMIC BRIGADE HAS ENGAGED THANOS.

BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!

AN ENGAGEMENT OF THAT MAGNITUDE COULD--

THE POWERS UNLEASHED IN THE INITIAL CLASH ARE BEYOND THE POWER OF WORDS TO DESCRIBE.

MANY OF THE EDICTS OF NATURE FALL VICTIM TO THE ASSAULT.

I SENSE NEAR COLLAPSE ALONG THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF REALITY.

FEAR GROWS WITHIN MY HEART.

THE FEAR THAT I AM WITNESSING THE END OF THE UNIVERSE!

ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEMS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY ARE RAVAGED BY THE EFFECTS OF THIS CELESTIAL CLASH.

CALCULATING THE BILLIONS OF LIVES LOST AS A RESULT OF THIS CONFRONTATION WILL HAVE TO WAIT.

BUT EVEN IN THE MIDST OF SUCH DESTRUCTION, I AM AWESTRUCK BY MYSTERIES OF THE SOUL.

THE TITAN, EROS, FELT CERTAIN THAT DEATH WAS NEAR TO CLAIMING HIM-

THE ONLY THING GREATER THAN HIS SURPRISE AT FINDING HIMSELF AMONG THE LIVING...

„ IS DISCOVERING WHO HIS SAVIOR IS!

MISTRESS DEATH!

HER HATRED FOR THANOS MUST REACH UNFATHOMABLE DEPTHS!

I HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD BE SO...

YES... SHEER LUCK WE... SURVIVED...

TOO CLOSE.

WARLOCK! WHAT IS THAT?!

AN INTER-DIMENSIONAL DISTORTION CASCADE!

QUICKLY! WE MUST BE AWAY FROM HERE!

IF CAUGHT WITHIN ITS WARP-ING EMBRACE WE WILL BE LOST!

A PERILOUS UNIVERSE WHERE EACH SECOND REVEALS A NEW AND GREATER DANGER.

CASE IN POINT: THE PLANET EARTH, JARRED LOOSE FROM ITS ORBIT, AND DRIFTING AWAY FROM ITS SUN, IS ABOUT TO HAVE A NEW DOOM VISITED UPON IT.

A DIMENSIONAL DISTORTION CASCADE SPIRALS TOO NEAR THE FRAGILE WORLD...

...AND ITS WOES INCREASE A THOUSAND FOLD...

...AS INTERDIMENSIONAL SCAVENGERS, SUCH AS ANNIHILUS, SWARM DOWN UPON THE ONCE EMERALD JEWEL.

YET SUCH WORRIES SEEM HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING WHEN CONSIDERED IN CONTEXT.

FOR THIS UNIVERSE WAITS A MERE BREATH AWAY FROM ALL-ENCOMPASSING COSMIC DESTRUCTION.

A DOOM BIRTHED AND NURTURED WITHIN THE MAD AMBITIONS OF A BLACK SOUL.

THANOS DEFENDS HIS DIVINITY.

LET THE HEAVENS TREMBLE.

THE TWO CELESTIALS DRAFT HELPLESS PLANETS INTO THE CONFLICT, USING THEM AS WEAPONS OF WAR.

THE FACT THAT SOME OF THESE WORLDS ARE INHABITED BY SENTIENT LIFE CANNOT BE A CONSIDERATION IN THIS GALAXY-SPANNING CONTEST.

WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT THEIR MENACING POTENTIAL IS NEUTRALIZED BY POWER WITHOUT LIMIT.

BUT A SECOND LATER IT BECOMES APPARENT THAT THEIR SACRIFICE WAS BUT A PLOY, A DIVERSIONARY TACTIC.

FOR THE *TRUE THRUST* OF THE ASSAULT COMES FROM *CHRONOS*, WHO SEEKS TO *BURY* THE TITAN DEEP WITHIN LAYERS OF *TIME* LONG FORGOTTEN.

A FUTILE HOPE.

FOR ONE OF THE *INFINITY GEMS* ON THANOS'S GAUNTLET GIVES HIM *MASTERY* OVER THAT WHICH SEEKS TO *OVER-WHELM* HIM.

IT BE LIKE STRIVING TO *DROWN* AN *OCEAN*

YET DEFEAT IS ANSWERED WITH *RENEWED VIGOR*: A TWO-FRONT ASSAULT BY *LORD ORDER* AND *MASTER CHAOS*.

THEY HOPE TO *DICHOTOMIZE* THE TITAN.

*A DIVIDED ENEMY* IS AN *EASIER FOE* TO DEAL WITH.

BUT THANOS REFUSES TO SURRENDER HIS *INDIVIDUALITY*.

BOOM

AND THE BATTLE CONTINUES TO RAGE WITHOUT PAUSE.

FORCES COMBINED TO ADD UP TO MORE THAN THE SUM OF THEIR TOTAL.

THE TEMPORAL IS ABANDONED FOR PURE FORCE OF ENERGY.

AND THE SHEER INTENSITY OF GALACTUS, THE STRANGER AND EON'S BLITZKRIEG CATCHES THE MAD TITAN OFF BALANCE.

YET IT IS BUT A MINOR SETBACK FOR THANOS, ONE THAT CAN BE OVERCOME WITH A MERE WISH.

BY THE HEAVENS, WHAT AM I DOING?!?

GIVING THOSE WRETCHES EXACTLY WHAT THEY DESERVE!

BUT THEY ARE MY HEAVENLY BROTHERS...

AND I WILL KILL THEM ALL!

THIS IS UTTER FOLLY!

THE UNIVERSE IS BEING DESTROYED BY THOSE SEEKING TO DEFEND IT!

SUCH INSANITY CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE!

AND HOW WOULD YOU STOP IT?

BY LOVE?

NO, I SHOULD HONOR AND CHERISH THEM!

WHAT MADNESS IS THIS!?!

CONFLICTING EMOTIONS... TEARING ME APART...

THIS CAN ONLY BE THE WORK OF--

--MISTRESS LOVE AND SIRE HATE!!

HOW DARE YOU TAMPER WITH ME SO?!

BE AWAY, BOTHERSOME MANIPU-LATORS!

BUT ALSO BEWARE DECEIVERS, TITAN...

HELL'S FIRE, WHAT?!

EXACTLY, MY LIEGE!!

MEPHISTO!

COME TO RELIEVE YOU OF YOUR BURDEN OF SUPREMACY!

A RESPONSIBILITY I AM NOT QUITE READY TO RELINQUISH, TRAITOR!

ACCKK!

YOU REVERTED TO TYPE PREMATURELY, DEVIL!

AN ERROR YOU WILL PAY FOR DEARLY!

WHAT?! WHO?

MISTRESS DEATH?

YOU TOO BETRAY ME?

I OFFERED YOU THE UNIVERSE...

NO!

'TIS TRULY BEST THIS WAY!

DIVINITY CALLS FOR CLEAR THINKING, UNBURDENED WITH CHAOTIC EMOTION.

LET ME BE RID OF ALL ILLUSIONS,

FOR I AM THANOS!

I AM SUPREME!!

WHO IS THERE TO ARGUE WITH THIS SENTIMENT?

THE GALACTIC DISRUPTION HAS ABATED!

BUT THE WAR CONTINUES.

DO NOT DELUDE YOURSELF INTO THINKING OTHERWISE.

THIS SHATTERED WORLD IN THE DISTANCE... I KNOW IT, HAVE VISITED IT...

IT WAS INHABITED!

THERE MIGHT WELL BE SURVIVORS AMIDST THE WRECKAGE!

WE MUST SEARCH THEM OUT!

I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST IT.

I BELIEVE I'VE HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH OF YOUR ADVICE, WARLOCK.

AS YOU WISH.

BY THE STARS!

IT'S JUST THAT A HEART, EVEN ONE AS STRONG AS YOURS, CAN ONLY TAKE SO MUCH.

THIS BERSERK CONFLICT MUST END...

NOT UNTIL THANOS IS STOPPED!

HE IS A NIHILIST.

UNLESS HIS REIGN TOPPLES, THIS FATE AWAITS THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU...

NOW THAT HIS FOOT SOLDIERS HAVE FALLEN... PROUD ETERNITY AT LAST DEIGNS TO SHOW HIMSELF!!

TO RECLAIM THAT WHICH IS MINE AND MYSELF!

CONTROL OF THIS REALITY!

A PRIZE I FOUGHT HARD TO GAIN AND ONE I SHALL NEVER ABANDON!

THEN LET US SEE WHICH ALMIGHTY BEING TRULY HAS THE TIGHTER GRIP ON THE FABRIC OF WHAT IS!

DEFEND YOURSELF, TITAN!

SURELY, THIS MUST BE THE END!

NO, THE *OUTCOME* OF YONDER COSMIC BATTLE IS ALREADY *DECIDED.*

*HOW* CAN YOU KNOW THIS?

I AM *LINKED* TO THE *INFINITY GEMS* IN WAYS EVEN I DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND.

THE MASTERY OF ALL ACTUALITY IS NOW FIRMLY IN THE GRASP OF *ONE* INDI-VIDUAL.

*THANOS* OR *ETERNITY*?! WHO PREVAILED?

ONE WHO ONLY LOSES WHEN HIS *SUBCONCIOUS DESIRES* BETRAY HIM-

YOU MEAN...

I DO.

AND IN THAT *SLIM HOPE* DOES SURVIVAL LAY-

MORE *RIDDLES,* WARLOCK?

IS SPEAKING *PLAINLY* BEYOND YOUR *ABILITY*?!

PERHAPS.

DR. STRANGE, RETRIEVAL IS IN ORDER!

HOW GOES THE STRUGGLE?

POORLY.

HORRENDOUSLY.

THE NATURE OF ENERGY IS TO DISPERSE.

THE NATURE OF DESPOTS IS TO CONTAIN.

CONFLICTING TENDENCIES.

BY THE HEAVENS...

THANOS HAS SUCCEEDED IN IMPRISONING EVEN ALL-POWERFUL ETERNITY.

ALL IS LOST.

MASTER!

MY LOVER!

SPEAK TO ME!

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME SAY, DEAR TERRAXIA?

THANOS HAS NOW THOROUGHLY USURPED ETERNITY'S RIGHTFUL POSITION AS THE CENTER OF ALL REALITY IN THIS SPHERE,

THIS WATCHER CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT A VALIANT EFFORT TO SAVE THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE HAS FAILED.

SIRE, YOUR BODY?

NO LONGER NEEDED...

MAGNIFICENT THANOS HAS RID HIMSELF OF THE FLESH... HAS SHED ALL VULNERABIL-ITY!

AS HE DID ONCE BEFORE WHEN IN POSSESSION OF THE COSMIC CUBE.

THEN AS NOW, THANOS UNDERESTIMATED THE STRENGTH OF THE FLESH.

ESPECIALLY CHARRED FLESH, SPURRED ON BY HATRED.

DEEP WITHIN WITHERED NEBULA, VENGEANCE STIRS.

A SENSES SHATTERING RETURN TO THE *FLESH.*

MASTER... I COULD NOT... REACH HER IN TIME... I...

NO!

AND A REVERSAL OF DIRE FORTUNES.

NEBULA STEPS AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF OBLIVION!!

THE MANTLE OF PROVIDENCE RESTS NOW ON NEW SHOULDERS!

MY EVERY WISH IS BUT AN URGE AWAY!

AND YOU KNOW WHAT I YEARN FOR, DEAR THANOS?

REVENGE!

MASTER!

THE REINS OF POWER HAVE CHANGED HANDS.

HOW?!?

OUR SITUATION HAS GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE!

THE NEWLY-CHRISTENED ALL-MIGHTY IS DERANGED FROM MONTHS OF PAIN AND ANGUISH.

STRANGE, I HAVE NEED OF YOUR MYSTIC TALENTS.

TRAPPED,

AND ALONE.

FOR I HAD NOT THE FORSIGHT TO CREATE TERRAXIA CAPABLE OF SURVIVING DEEP SPACE WITHOUT THE AID OF MY NOW-FORFEITED GODLY POWERS.

I SHALL MISS HER.

BUT SURVIVAL BE NOT A TREASURED PRIZE.

THIS BODY SHALL ENDURE LONG AFTER MY SPIRIT SUCCUMBS TO THIS EXILE NEBULA HAS BANISHED ME TO.

AN ETERNITY OF DRIFTING HELPLESSLY IN SPACE.

AN INFINITY TO MULL ON MY SINS AND FOLLIES.

WHAT?!

A MYSTIC PORTAL.

WHO?

WELCOME TO MOTHER EARTH, TITAN-

ADAM WARLOCK?

WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?

A QUESTION I WONDER ABOUT MY-SELF!

SO THAT I MIGHT DESTROY YOU, VILLAIN!!

SURFER-- NO!

BACK, STRANGE!

NEITHER OF US HAS THE POWER TO SEPARATE THESE LUNATICS!

BUT YOU CAN SUMMON THOSE WHO DO!

WAY AHEAD OF YOU, ADAM.

I WAS ONLY ABLE TO LOCATE THESE *FIVE* BEFORE YOUR RETURN.

THEY WILL DO NICELY.

GENTLEMEN, IF YOU'D BE SO KIND...

NOW IF YOU TWO ARE QUITE *THROUGH*, YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN HOW *WE* MIGHT YET *SAVE* THIS UNIVERSE FROM *DESTRUCTION!*

WHICH IS EXACTLY WHERE IT'S HEADED WITH *NEBULA* IN CONTROL OF THE *GEMS.*

HER *INTELLECT* IS NOT UP TO *GODHOOD!*

SUDDEN *OMNIPOTENCE* WOULD BE A CRUSHING LOAD FOR EVEN THE *FINEST MIND.*

FOR NEBULA'S *SCARRED PSYCHE* IT MUST BE *OVERWHELMING.*

TOTAL *CONFUSION* REIGNS AS SHE STRIVES TO *ADJUST* TO THE DELUGE OF UNIVERSAL *SENSORY INPUT.*

SUFFERING THE *NIGHTMARE* OF ABRUPTLY BECOMING *AWARE* OF ALL *LIFE* AND *MATTER.*

MOST CERTAINLY THE THOUGHT OF *ESCAPING* INTO *CATATONIC OBLIVION* ENTERS HER CHAOTIC SOUL.

*PRAY* THAT SHE DOES NOT *SURRENDER* TO THE *URGE.*

FOR AN ENTIRE REALITY WOULD JOIN HER IN THAT DARK JOURNEY.

THEN IT IS AGREED, WE GO WITH MY DESIGN?

THIS PLAN STINKS OF RISK.

BUT I SEE NO ALTERNA-TIVE.

NOR DO I.

IN THAT CASE, A WORD ALONE WITH THANOS IS NEEDED BEFORE WE CAN PROCEED.

SO THAT YOU CAN SCHEME UP SOME NEW DEVILTRY AGAINST US?

I TELL YOU THIS WARLOCK IS OBVIOUSLY THANOS'S SECRET PARTNER!

TO THE DOOR, DOOM...

YOU FOOL, YOU WILL REGRET NOT HEEDING MY WARNING!

THEY USED TO BE COMRADES!

WELL, COMRADE, WHAT NOW?

STRAIGHT-FOWARD CONVER-SATION.

YOU KNOW WE NEED YOUR HELP TO OVER-COME NEBULA.

AND WHAT IF I WITHHOLD THIS AID..?

WHAT BENEFIT DO I REAP FROM NEBULA'S DEFEAT?

THE TRUTH?

WHAT TRUTH?

ABOUT YOUR-SELF.

YOU HAVE SOME SPECIAL INSIGHT INTO THIS MATTER?

YES,

I WAS PART OF THE SOUL GEM WHILE YOU POSSESSED IT.

WHICH PERMITTED ME ACCESS TO YOUR INNER HEART.

I KNOW YOU AS NO OTHER BEING IN THE UNIVERSE DOES,

BETTER THAN EVEN YOU DO YOURSELF!

LOOK BACK ONTO YOUR LIFE, THANOS OF TITAN, AND WHAT DO YOU SEE?

A MAN ALWAYS SEEKING ULTIMATE POWER AND LOSING IT AS SOON AS HE ATTAINS IT!

WHY?

BECAUSE DEEP IN HIS SOUL HE KNOWS HE IS NOT WORTHY OF IT.

THREE TIMES YOU HAVE TRIUMPHED OVER INCREDIBLE ODDS TO GAIN THE ENDS YOU DESIRE...

AND THREE TIMES YOU HAVE SUBCONSCIOUSLY SUPPLIED THE MEANS TO YOUR OWN DEFEAT-

YOU LET NEBULA WREST THE INFINITY GEMS FROM YOU JUST AS YOU ALLOWED CAPTAIN MARVEL TO SHATTER THE COSMIC CUBE!

NO. IT WAS A MISTAKE...

EVEN GODS ERR...

I DIDN'T...

I... I...

I WILL AID YOU.

BUT AFTERWARDS...

NO PROMISES.

NONE EXPECTED,

STRANGE, IS ALL IN READINESS?

FIGHT WELL, ASGARDIAN-

WE SHALL GIVE IT OUR ALL.

EVERYONE'S SET TO GO!

THEY HAVEN'T ONE CHANCE IN A MILLION FOR VICTORY.

THEY ARE WELL AWARE OF THAT FACT-

BUT WE DO.

YES, ONE IN A MILLION-

I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THANOS'S *HUNGER* FOR THIS *INFINITE MIGHT.*

*TOMORROW* IS MINE TO SCULPT TO MY FANCY.

THE *UNIVERSE* IS *CLAY* WAITING TO BE *MOLDED.*

NEVER AGAIN WILL I BE *VICTIMIZED* OR *SURPRISED*; FOR I HAVE SEEN MY EVERY *WAKING MOMENT* STRETCHING OFF INTO FOREVER!

IN FACT, A MOST *SATISFYING INSTANT* IS ALMOST UPON US.

ALREADY THE *MIST* BEGINS TO *PART.*

THE *FUTURE* CLEARS FOR ME,

AND SO DOES MY *DESTINY.*

IN EXACTLY *FIVE SECONDS* FROM NOW I WILL BE RECEIVING *VISITORS.*

TWO OLD FOES, AND THREE OTHERS WHOSE RECENT ACTIONS HAVE EARNED THEM MY ANIMOSITY!

THEY STRIKE AS ONE. THEIR COMBINED MIGHT COULD EASILY REND ASSUNDER A SMALL PLANET.

BUT AGAINST NEBULA AND THE INFINITY GEMS...

...THEY ARE NOTHING.

MERELY A MOMENTARY DIVERSION.

THEY ARE BUT CHILDREN SENT TO PESTER.

A MEANS TO ATTRACT MY ATTENTION.

THE ARCHITECTS OF THIS FRUITLESS ASSAULT ARE NOW NOTICED AND TRACKED DOWN BY MY COSMIC SENSES.

YOU'LL FIND THIS INTERESTING, EROS.

THERE ARE THREE WHO SEEK TO CHALLENGE MY MIGHT.

AND ONE OF THEM IS...

...YOUR BROTHER, THANOS!!

COME TO RECLAIM MY RIGHTFUL PROPERTY, WENCH.

WITH THE HELP OF YOUR TWO LITTLE FRIENDS?

YOU DIS-APPOINT ME, THANOS!

TWO LITTLE FRIENDS...?

I THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE YOUR LAST STAND ARMED WITH MORE THAN JUST EMPTY BRAVADO.

NEXT THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

ZONE